



# Dakota English Language Proficiency Assessment

## TRAINING GUIDE FOR SCORING THE SPEAKING SUBTEST



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## Complete Speaking Test Rubrics

Questions 1–3	WARM-UP
	DO NOT SCORE

**NOTE:** During questions 1–3, encourage each student to speak loudly enough that his or her responses may easily be scored and help the student feel as comfortable as possible speaking. Be positive.

Questions 4–8	REPEAT/READ ALOUD
Score Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response shows <b>Good Fluency</b>—accurate pronunciation of individual sounds, natural speech rate, intonation, and rhythm.</li> <li>• Response is linguistically accurate—no or very few minor phonemic/phonetic or grammatical errors.</li> </ul>
Score Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response shows <b>Some Fluency</b>—some problems with pronunciation of individual sounds, speech rate, intonation, and rhythm, but these do not cause serious problems in intelligibility.</li> <li>• Response contains several linguistic errors—phonemic/phonetic or grammatical.</li> </ul>
Score Point 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response shows <b>No Fluency</b> or refusal to speak; speaking only in native language; insufficient information to score; or unintelligible.</li> </ul>

**DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING:** In questions 4–8, single words, phrases, and sentences are repeated/read aloud primarily in order to assess pronunciation. You will be scoring individual sounds, such as vowels and consonants, which are called segments. These can occur word-initially, -medially, and -finally. For example, a student who says “djong” when trying to say “young” has made a pronunciation error in the first sound, or segment, of the word.

You will also assess rate of speech, rhythm, and intonation, which are called suprasegmentals. Very slow, halting speech is an example of a problem with rate of speech; speech that is at a fairly normal rate, but choppy, indicates a problem with rhythm. Typical English sentence intonation rises on the last content word of a sentence and then falls. Intonation that does not change at all or changes in an unnatural place would be inaccurate.

The student is not creating original grammatical structures, so grammar errors will probably be infrequent and are not an important aspect to consider in scoring these questions. However, it is possible that a student might omit a word(s) or substitute one small function word (such as a preposition) for another. Either of these would be considered an error.

Questions 9–13	SENTENCE COMPLETION
Score Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Good Structure and Precise Vocabulary:</b> response is informationally appropriate to the prompt.</li> <li>• Response is free of linguistic errors—pronunciation or grammatical—or contains a few minor errors.</li> </ul>
Score Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Some Structure and Some Vocabulary:</b> one or more words may not be precise; response is somewhat informationally appropriate to the prompt.</li> <li>• Response contains a few serious linguistic errors—pronunciation or grammatical—or several minor errors, but is intelligible.</li> </ul>
Score Point 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No Structure or Unintelligible:</b> insufficient information to score; refusal to speak; speaking only in native language; only repeating prompt</li> </ul>

**DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING:** Questions 9–13 assess the student’s ability to create an original short sentence based on a picture. Part of a sentence is provided in print and orally, and the remaining part that each student creates should complete or finish the sentence. You will be evaluating the sentence as to whether it contains the necessary features—a subject and a verb, which should agree (she is running, they are running). In addition, the printed part of the sentence may require a specific verb tense, so you will also be scoring the sentence as to whether the verb tense is appropriate. For example, “Yesterday . . . (plus a picture of a boy and girl at a zoo)” requires a sentence in the past tense. A student would be expected to say something like this: “Yesterday the boy and girl were at the zoo.” Both the subject and verb are plural and in agreement, and the verb is in the past tense, as indicated by “yesterday.”

The picture provided suggests the kind of nouns and verbs to be used in the completed sentence. The student’s response should make sense in relation to the situation portrayed. Choice of vocabulary (preciseness of vocabulary) is to be assessed. Additionally, pronunciation, rate of speech, intonation, and rhythm should be evaluated.

Question 14 STORYTELLING	
Score Point 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows <b>High Level</b> of ability to produce a spoken response to a set of three pictures.</li> <li><b>Very Few Errors</b> (minor) in pronunciation and grammar; speech includes complex sentence structures; vocabulary is precise and varied, including idiomatic expressions</li> <li>Errors never distract listeners' attention or cause confusion about meaning.</li> <li>Speech is well organized; information is plausible and precise and is presented logically and with appropriate transitions.</li> </ul>
Score Point 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows <b>Ability</b> to produce a spoken response to a set of three pictures.</li> <li><b>Some Errors</b> (mostly minor) in pronunciation and grammar; some variety in sentence structure; vocabulary in general is appropriate and varied, perhaps including some use of idiomatic expressions</li> <li>Errors generally do not distract listeners' attention or cause confusion about meaning.</li> <li>Speech is generally well organized; information is generally plausible and precise and is presented logically and with appropriate transitions.</li> </ul>
Score Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows <b>Some Ability</b> to produce a spoken response to a set of three pictures.</li> <li><b>Numerous Errors</b> in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary; heavy reliance on simple sentence structures, with almost no use of idiomatic expressions</li> <li>Errors are often distracting to listeners and cause confusion about meaning.</li> <li>Speech may be insufficient and present poorly organized or disorganized information; information may be imprecise or inaccurate.</li> </ul>
Score Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows <b>Very Limited</b> ability to respond to a set of three pictures.</li> <li>Speech contains <b>Very Little Correct</b> pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary; single words instead of complete thoughts.</li> <li>Numerous and serious problems distract listeners and cause confusion about meaning; may be incoherent in places.</li> <li>Amount of speech is minimal; information may be irrelevant or inaccurate.</li> </ul>
Score Point 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Too Minimal</b> to score or <b>Unintelligible</b>; refusal to speak; no response; response in a language other than English or only repeating prompt; insufficient information to score</li> </ul>



**DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING:** Question 14 consists of a single storytelling task based on a set of three sequential pictures. This type of task elicits an extended response, which is expected to be longer than any of the other tasks in the Speaking test. The amount of language produced as well as the quality will be assessed.

Pronunciation, rate of speech, intonation, and rhythm should also be evaluated along with grammar and the ability to choose appropriate and precise vocabulary. In addition, organization is evaluated since the set of pictures supports the use of organizational devices, such as first, next, then, and last.

Questions 15-19	SOCIAL INTERACTION
Score Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Response Appropriate</b> for the prompt; vocabulary is precise.</li><li>• Response is free of linguistic errors—pronunciation or grammar—or only a few very minor errors</li></ul>
Score Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Response Somewhat Appropriate</b> for the prompt; one or more words may not be precise.</li><li>• Response contains a few serious linguistic errors—pronunciation or grammar—but is intelligible.</li></ul>
Score Point 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Response Unintelligible</b> or refusal to speak; speaking only in native language or only repeating prompt; insufficient information to score</li></ul>

**DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING:** Questions 15–19 assess the ability to respond in a socially appropriate manner to a short conversation opener, which typically would elicit a brief rejoinder from a native English speaker. You will assess the appropriateness of the response. While appropriate and precise vocabulary is important to the response, there is usually not just one way to respond. For example, to the question “Hi, how are you?” there are different acceptable responses:

I’m fine, thanks.  
Fine, thanks. How are you?  
Great. What about you?  
Great!  
I’ve been better.  
Not doing so well.

In addition to different content, responses can also differ in structure, as shown in the sample responses above. A response can be a complete sentence, but it doesn’t need to be. A sentence fragment or a single word might also be considered a completely appropriate response. Pronunciation, rate of speech, intonation, and rhythm should also be evaluated along with grammar.

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Speaking Test

### ***What should I do during the Warm-Up questions?***

As each student answers the Warm-Up questions, the teacher or test administrator can take the opportunity to encourage the student to speak up and do his or her best. It is important to present the Warm-Up questions in a friendly and relaxed manner so the student feels comfortable speaking aloud.

### ***If the test is untimed, why are there suggested times for pauses between items?***

The Speaking test is untimed, but there is a suggested pause time for each item, which is an estimated time that should be adequate for most students to respond. Usually, if a student cannot respond within the suggested time, adding more time does not increase the likelihood of the student being able to respond. However, students should never be rushed. Therefore, a student should be given more time to respond if it appears that the student might be able to answer.

### ***Should I look at the rubric while a student is speaking?***

No. If you are reading the rubric, you might miss something important about the student's response. However, you should study the full Speaking rubric and examples carefully before you administer the test. During the test administration, you should look primarily at the key words above each score point on the scoring forms. If you need some extra help in making a decision, you can glance at the abbreviated rubric just below the bubbles.

### ***What if the student does not use the picture to complete the sentence?***

It is possible that an advanced student might be able to complete the sentence creatively and in a grammatically accurate manner without relying on the picture provided. If it is clear that the student is not using previously memorized language, the student should not be penalized for not using the picture.

If the student does not know the vocabulary for what is depicted in the picture, and the completed sentence is unidiomatic and/or ungrammatical, then the score should be lowered accordingly.

### ***Why are there more points for the Storytelling activity?***

For the Storytelling activity, each student is allowed time to prepare and then respond. The three pictures allow each student the opportunity to create a longer piece of discourse. Therefore, with a range of four points, those students who tell a story in greater detail can be awarded an appropriate score for their efforts.

### ***What if the student has a one-word response for one of the Social Interaction items?***

We are aware that a few of the Social Interaction Speaking items can elicit a one-word response, although we generally tried to limit this kind of item. In the directions for scoring the Social Interaction items, there is an example of a correct one-word response, "Great!" to the question, "Hi, how are you?"

However, if a student response is a simple "yes" or "no," the full 2 points should not be given even though this answer might be appropriate. With ESL students, plain yes-no responses are often an evasion from using the language. However, an enthusiastic "Great!" can be viewed as idiomatic, and therefore, something quite different, for which the full 2 points can be given.

***What level of speaking ability is required for administering the Speaking subtest?***

Preferably the test should be administered by someone with native-like speaking fluency.

***What is Harcourt's position regarding prompting students during the Speaking subtest administration?***

There are two occasions in the Speaking subtest when the test administrator needs to make it clear to the student how and when the student should respond, the first occasion is during the three warm up questions. At this time, the test administrator can suggest the examinee should speak by using such encouragement as, "You have permission to speak." "It's your turn." "You may begin." The student can also be encouraged to speak up or speak more loudly. The other opportunity for clarification and encouragement to a student is during the presentation of sample items. While presenting a sample item, the test administrator can ask a student directly if they have understood, and can answer student questions. This level of prompting is allowed in order to make the instructions completely clear to the students and to respect any cultural tendencies the students may have toward turn-taking.

When presenting operational items to a student, the test administrator should follow the text of the Directions for Administering exclusively without deviation. This will be the only method for ensuring a standard administration of the Speaking subtest.